

BUILDING A GOD: THE CULT OF ANTINOUS AND
IDENTITY IN THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis attempts to understand the distribution of Antinous worship in the Roman Empire and why he was worshipped. By examining the written sources and material culture available on Antinous, primary sources both pagan and Christian, and material culture such as the sculptures of Antinous, Antinoopolis and temples dedicated to Antinous, I came to the conclusion that Antinous was worshipped primarily in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. The Eastern part of the Roman Empire consisted of people who were of Greek descent. By examining Roman writings against Greek people and culture, I came to the conclusion that there were reasons that people worshipped Antinous. The first was to connect to the imperial center because a Roman emperor established the cult of Antinous. The second was that Antinous was Greek, and because Greeks were seen as inferior by the Roman west, his worship appealed to such people.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a historical personage, Antinous has been discussed in both archaeological and art historical terms. The trajectory of his life and death has been traced, and attempts have been made to identify how Antinous, an ordinary human, was incorporated into the Roman Pantheon. It is not the aim of this paper to address the material remains or the life of Antinous, or why and how Hadrian deified him. There is another angle from which Antinous' cult can be interpreted. By attempting to understand who worshipped Antinous, this paper will try to answer why Antinous was worshipped. The question then arises of why the eastern part celebrated the cult of Antinous more strongly than the West. Why did the local population of the eastern provinces of Rome, specifically Anatolia and Egypt, choose to worship Antinous, even after Hadrian's death? Is the worship of Antinous a reflection of cultural identity in the Roman empire, and if so how?

Material remains such as the city of Antinoopolis and the inscriptions found in Anatolia and Athens, and ancient sources such as Cassius Dio, the *Historia Augusta* and Pausanias suggest that the worship of Antinous was not equally distributed in the Roman Empire. Scholars generally believe that Antinous worship had no prominence in the West, a belief which has led scholars to place the original location of the obelisk of Antinous in Antinoopolis, instead of Rome.¹ More sculptures of Antinous have been discovered in the West. However, besides the temple at Lavinium, which was dedicated

¹ Boatwright 1987.251

both to Antinous and Diana, and had been established shortly after Antinous' death,² the West did not hold honors for the deified Antinous to the extent that the East did; there were no games in honor of Antinous in Italy, no contests, rites or oracles. The worship of Antinous was more public in the East,³ and as a result, more durable.

Hadrian established the cult in the eastern province of the Roman Empire where Antinous died, and the people who worshipped Antinous were Greek speaking. Since their culture and language was separate from the Romans who ruled their provinces, and since they were seen as less connected to a Roman identity than those who dwelled in Rome, it is reasonable to assume that the the Greeks of the empire adopted Antinous' cult, a cult established by Roman authorities, as a means to reflect their Roman identity. Hadrian's persuasions and and a desire to please the emperor must have played a part in attracting people to the cult of Antinous during Hadrian's lifetime, but the cult persisted even after Hadrian's death, as seen through the denouncements of Christian writers centuries later.⁴ Though it is possible that the people of the East believed in the deified Antinous, his ethnic identity contributes to their belief in him. During the Hellenistic period, Greek cities used to hold public cults for private citizens,⁵ although this practice

² Beard 1998.272

³ Boatwright 1987.251

⁴ Both Mary Boatwright and Royston Lambert present the argument that Antinous' cult was not very popular or famous, however, this does not undermine the fact that the games for Antinous persisted in Athens for over a century (Boatwright 1987.252) and that the worship itself lasted until the ban on paganism.

⁵ Price 1984.47

became politically undesirable during the Roman Imperial period.⁶ It is important for the success of Antinous' cult that Hadrian promoted it in the Greek speaking provinces.

Antinous was Greek and was worshipped in the provinces that were accustomed to worship private citizens. Adopting the cult of Antinous was not difficult by such people, especially since Antinous was often assimilated into familiar gods such as Dionysus and Osiris.⁷ By adopting his cult, the Greek speaking people of the Roman Empire, who had a tradition of worshipping important citizens, supported the cult of a Greek-born man who became god by the decree of the Roman administration.

This paper will attempt to understand the mindset of the people who worshipped Antinous by discussing how and where Antinous was worshipped, and how the Greek speaking people, imperial subjects in the Roman Empire, were treated by the non-Greek speaking Romans. The scope is to understand what role cultural identity played in the worship of Antinous. For this reason the paper will examine the ancient sources which wrote about the life and the cult of Antinous, from pagan sources, such as Cassius Dio, the *Historia Augusta*, and Pausanias, to Christian ones, such as Jerome, Origen, and Justin Martyr. These sources will help answer the question of who worshipped Antinous and how. To understand the why, the paper will turn to Roman writers from the western part of the Empire, and the attitude of the Italian and Western Roman people towards Greek speaking people, and easterners during the Imperial period. Understanding the voice of non-Greeks aids in clarifying the question of identity for Greeks in Rome. As I will argue, because Greeks were seen as inferior in the Roman Empire--not possessing as

⁶ Price 1984.50

⁷ For discussion of Antinous worshipped alongside other deities, see pages 9, 19-21.

much virtue or morality as “true Romans”--they would want to adopt a cult given to them by the Roman administration, and because the cult given to them honored a Greek, they saw themselves represented in the larger Roman world.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE CULT OF ANTINOUS

There are few contemporary historical sources on Antinous' life, and for this reason, combing ancient texts for information on Antinous and his cult presents a challenge. Antinous' origins, in fact, are absolutely unknown, with no record of his parents, family or any interactions with members of Hadrian's court.⁸ All information about Antinous comes from after his death and deification. Both the *Historia Augusta* and Cassius Dio's *Roman History* were written decades, if not centuries, after the deaths of both Hadrian and Antinous, with Dio's account having been written in the early to mid third century⁹ and the *Historia Augusta* disputed, but generally believed to have been written in the late fourth and early fifth centuries; their authors never met Hadrian, and the stories which they recount have had centuries to acquire rumors and gossip. Only Pausanias, the Greek geographer, was alive during Hadrian's reign and even he writes that he "never saw [Antinous] in the flesh."¹⁰

Of the three ancient Roman sources that name Antinous and describe his death and cult, Pausanias and Cassius Dio, both from Anatolia--Dio was from Bithynia, the birthplace of Antinous--and both writing in Greek, mention Antinous' place of origin, whereas the *Historia Augusta* does not. For the Anatolians, it would have been a source of pride to mention a man of their own country, exalted by Hadrian, whereas the *Historia*

⁸ Jones 1999.82

⁹ Cary 1914.xi

¹⁰ Paus.8.9.7

Augusta, written in Latin with presumably Latin minded authors does not have such biases. Other details about Antinous' life can be surmised. In his biography of Antinous, Royston Lambert posits that Antinous must have been born around the year 110-112 CE because of his role as Hadrian's lover.¹¹ Because Antinous died in 130 CE, and because his sexual relationship with Hadrian was still acceptable to his Roman subjects, Lambert reasons that Antinous could not have been older than twenty years of age. Lambert also writes that portraits of Antinous show him with shorn hair and signs of shaving, so he must have been on the cusp of adulthood, when being a lover would be frowned upon.¹²

Cassius Dio writes that "Antinous was from Bithynium, a city of Bithynia, which [is] also call[ed] Claudiopolis,"¹³ and Pausanias writes that Antinous "was by birth from

¹¹ Lambert 1997.19

¹² Lambert 1997.60; Although Lambert's estimate is reasonable, there are a few problems which arise with it. The first issue arises with the claim that sculptures and representations of Antinous show him with shorn hair. Although these sculptures are meant to show Antinous, they have been commissioned after his death by Hadrian, whose purpose in making them might not have been to show Antinous as he must have appeared. The second problem is that although at the time of his death Antinous was still presumably Hadrian's lover, this does not mean that he could not have been older than twenty. Lambert himself writes that Hadrian's devotion to Antinous and his public relationship with the boy was seen as problematic by those around him--in fact, Hadrian broke the societal expectation of the emperor happy and devoted to his wife quite easily. If Hadrian could therefore break such a rule, it is not difficult to assume that he could break other rules, that is, the age at which it was no longer acceptable to keep an *eromenos*. The practice of pederasty which Lambert uses for his estimation was also Greek, and was appropriated by the Romans. Because of this, it is possible that Hadrian did not care to keep to such conventions. Christopher Jones writes that Antinous could have been as old as thirty by the time of his death. As the case is, however, Lambert's estimate seems more accepted than not, and is quoted by other scholars, and I will keep to this estimate for the purpose of this paper.

¹³ Cass.Dio.69.11.2

Bithynium beyond the river Sangarius.”¹⁴ It is likely that Hadrian met Antinous when the former visited Bithynia in Asia Minor in 123 CE,¹⁵ though the actual circumstances of the meetings are unknown. Lambert provides an alternate description of this meeting. In the writings of Tertullian of Carthage, Lambert finds traces of Antinous. He writes that Tertullian claims that a Roman god came from the school of pages in Rome, a school in which young men of possibly noble birth were trained for duties in court.¹⁶ If this statement is about Antinous--and Lambert, at least, cannot think of another figure for whom this could be true--then Antinous could have met Hadrian in Rome. Whatever the circumstances of this meeting, the writing on the Obelisk which Hadrian commissioned after Antinous’ death, written in hieroglyphs, presumably translated from an original Greek into [EGyptian], and highly fragmented, claims that the boy “was lifted up at the place of his birth by...”¹⁷ By 128 CE, Antinous was traveling with Hadrian across the Empire.¹⁸

The rest of Antinous’ brief life can be traced by Hadrian’s movement. He was with Hadrian when Hadrian arrived in Egypt, which means that he must have been with

¹⁴ Paus.8.9.7

¹⁵ Siebeck 2013.147; this was the only time during Antinous’ lifetime (or the lifetime given by Lambert) that Hadrian visited Bithynia.

¹⁶ Lambert 1997.60

¹⁷ Boatwright 1987.245; Boatwright provides an English translation of the text, with help from an earlier translation by A. Erman and O. Wintermute. The text is fragmented and unclear as to what the place of birth is.

¹⁸ Lambert 1997.61

Hadrian as the latter was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries.¹⁹ Hadrian then travelled through Judea, Arabia and Pelusium before rebuilding Pompey's tomb.²⁰ Antinous died, most likely drowned since his body was found in the Nile, around the end of October of 130 CE, near Hermopolis Magna.²¹ Dio recounts that Antinous, who had been a favorite of the emperor, "had died in Egypt, either by falling into the Nile, as Hadrian writes, or, as the truth is, by being offered in sacrifice."²² Dio's account seems to suggest gossip, for while writing that Hadrian honored the boy after his death, Dio attributes this to either "his [Hadrian's] love for him [Antinous] or because the youth had voluntarily undertaken to die (it being necessary that a life should be surrendered freely for the accomplishment of the ends Hadrian had in view)."²³ Dio's gossip does give Antinous a sense of heroism; however the rumor that Antinous may have died willingly to aid Hadrian is repeated in the *Historia Augusta*. In addition to the possibility of Antinous' willing sacrifice, the *Historia Augusta* notes briefly that Hadrian lost Antinous during a journey on the Nile.²⁴

Such stories, seemingly outlandish and possessing rumor-like qualities, serve to confuse even the manner in which Antinous died. Hadrian's sadness at Antinous' death

¹⁹ Cass. Dio.69.11.3; although Lambert takes this to mean that Antinous too was initiated, Dio does not make such a suggestion.

²⁰ Cass. Dio.69.11.1

²¹ Siebeck 2013.147

²² Cass. Dio.69.11.3

²³ Cass. Dio.69.11.3

²⁴ *HA*.1.14.5

and his outlandish reaction to the death--as Dio writes he built a city at the site of Antinous' death, established a cult for Antinous' divinity, and proclaimed that a star had been spotted in the sky after Antinous' death--seemed to have fueled the fire about such rumors. Caroline Vout writes that although modern historians cannot decide on how Antinous died for certain, "the only certainty is that the Empire was flooded with commemorative images to the 'god' or 'hero' Antinous."²⁵ This is seen in the *Historia Augusta* (1.14.5) and the accounts of Cassius Dio (69.11.3) and even the writings of Pausanias (Paus.8.9.7).

The *Historia Augusta* records that whatever the manner of Antinous' death, the Greeks--*Graeci*--honored him by the wish of Hadrian and declared oracles through his name. The small section which discusses what seems to resemble the worship of Antinous follows the rumors, and puts them aside to claim that,

et Graeci quidem volente Hadriano eum consecraverunt, oracula per eum dari adserentes, quae Hadrianus ipse composuisse iactatur.²⁶

Even the Greeks indeed elevated him to the rank of a deity with Hadrian's wish, declaring that oracles were given through him, which Hadrian himself is said to have composed.

²⁵ Vout 2005.82

²⁶ *HA*. 1.14.7

Here the *Historia Augusta* provides one form of worship which occurred in the cult of Antinous. The manner with which the information given is vague and the author does not believe in the validity of such oracles. However, the author does assert that after his deification, oracles were given in the name of Antinous, a fact later repeated and condemned by Christian writers. Unfortunately, the author does not say where these oracles were given and what the nature of such oracles were. Another important piece of information that the author of *Historia Augusta* offers is the fact that it was the Greeks who proclaimed Antinous a god and worshiped him. The distinction here is important, considering the fact that Antinous' worship was not exclusive to the Greeks in the Empire,²⁷ as Cassius Dio writes that Hadrian flooded the whole world²⁸ (i.e. the Roman Empire) with images of Antinous. However, the author of the *Historia Augusta* distinguishes the Greeks--not the Egyptians and not the Romans--as the people who proclaimed Antinous a god. Although this discussion of the worship of Antinous is brief, the author does provide these two details. These details highlight the importance of Greeks in the worship of Antinous and their claim that oracles were given in the name of Antinous.

Dio writes of the city which Hadrian--almost immediately after the death of Antinous--built in honor of the boy and the sculptures, or *ἀγάλματα*, which appeared *ἐν πάσῃ...οἰκουμένῃ*, ("in the whole inhabited world"). Pausanias claims to have seen

²⁷ On the worship of Antinous in Italy, see Lambert 1997; on Lambert's treatment of the worship of Antinous throughout the Empire, see below

²⁸ Cass. Dio.69.11.4

images and pictures of Antinous in Bithynia and in particular in “a building in the gymnasium of Mantinea,”²⁹ where Antinous was adorned as Dionysus. This is the extent of information given by ancient authors on Antinous. The literary records are quite vague on his personal traits, his death, and even how he was worshipped. Antinous’ premature death, his beauty, and Hadrian’s love for him, they claim, were the causes for his deification since Antinous was not a member of the royal family, an emperor, a very famous public figure, or hero.³⁰

To summarize thus far, Hadrian accomplished three deeds after Antinous’ death. He deified Antinous, establishing cults for him throughout the empire; he built the city of Antinoopolis on the site where Antinous drowned,³¹ and he commissioned sculptures of Antinous. The busts and sculptures of Antinous found throughout the Roman Empire, many which depict Antinous as other deities, are evidence of the cult. Additionally, “there are inscriptions which bear witness to divine honours to [Antinous],”³² and there is also evidence of shrines and “temples to validate and celebrate [Antinous], inscribed

²⁹ Paus.8.9.8

³⁰ Vout 2005.82 footnote 11. Caroline Vout writes that “Ancient authors do not tell us whether or not Antinous received a *senatus consultum*. Either he did receive one, and no mention of it survives in the sources, or he did not and was packaged as a different kind of deified figure from other ‘members’ of the imperial family. The archaeological evidence confirms this latter hypothesis. He is worshipped as θεός or *deus* and not *divus*. This titlature, combined with the success of his cult, warns of the dangers of configuring the so-called ‘imperial cult’ as a monolithic *divi*.”

³¹ Bell 1940.133-147; Siebeck 2013.148; An application for citizenship to the city of Antinous shows the way the city functioned. The city itself was open to Greeks and Egyptians of Greek descent and adhering to the “model of classical Athens,” was divided into ten tribes or demes.

³² Vout 2005.82

statue-bases from Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy,”³³ and coins minted in Antinous’ honor which were found in “over thirty provincial cities.”³⁴

The city of Antinoopolis was thought to have been the resting place of Antinous, although as is the case with many details of Antinous’ life, this is both uncertain and debated. His tomb has also been sought in Rome, on the Palatine Hill, Porta Maggiore, or in Hadrian’s Villa. In her book, Boatwright rejects the idea that either the Obelisk or the tomb of Antinous were located in Italy.³⁵ However, there is evidence (though very recent and not widely accepted), that a building discovered in Hadrian’s Villa may have been dedicated to the deified Antinous. The archaeological site uses the obelisk of Antinous, which reads that “[Antinoos] who is there (i.e. deceased), and who rests in this place, which is in the field of the lands(?) of the master(?) of... of Rome,”³⁶ as partial proof that Antinous was buried in Italy and in Hadrian’s Villa. The building had a mixed architecture, showing both Greek and Egyptian styles, date palms, and Egyptian hieroglyphs, with one of the enclosures housing a garden. In addition, the building seems to have been constructed hastily, as if the workers were in a hurry to complete it. Finally, two telamons in pharaonic costumes, believed to be representations of Antinous, were

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ For the discussion on the original location of the Obelisk of Antinous and the argument against it being in Italy, see Boatwright 1987

³⁶ Boatwright 1987.246

taken from the site.³⁷ Whether this complex was the tomb of Antinous or not,³⁸ its strong Egyptian motifs link it to Antinous and his cult.

³⁷ Whether or not they truly are representations of Antinous is subject to question. For more information on the archaeology of Antinous see Vout 2005.

³⁸ The funerary elements seem to suggest that it might have been a tomb. Also the hasty method with which the walls were built suggests that unlike the rest of the Villa, the *Antinoon* was not planned, and was built in a hurried way.

CHAPTER III

THE WORSHIP OF ANTINOUS

Although the cult of Antinous was established by Hadrian directly after Antinous' death, and may have been the result of the Emperor's grief according to Jones, it "far exceeds the cult of other heroes of the imperial period, whether private or civic, both in geographical spread and in degree of elaboration."³⁹ Antinous acquired a religious aura as a divinity who moved between heaven, earth, and the underworld. He was thought to answer prayers and cure diseases.⁴⁰ Pausanias writes that games and contests were held in his honor.⁴¹ There is an inscription for the priest of Antinous in the theatre of Dionysus in Athens, which speaks of the relative importance of the priest. Whatever Hadrian's plans may have been in deifying Antinous, the cult itself thrived, even without his sponsorship.

Despite the cult's longevity, ancient sources give little information about the practices of its members. In the West, at Lavinium, there was a group of men who formed an association worshipping Diana and Antinous, which met six times a year and gave monthly contributions to ensure proper burial for its members.⁴² This group offered a sense of community, and seemed to have a more social than religious aspect.⁴³ Amongst the ancient authors, Cassius Dio offers practically no information on the worship of

³⁹ Jones 2010.81

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Paus.8.9.7

⁴² Beard 1998.272

⁴³ Beard 1998.287

Antinous, and the *Historia Augusta*'s brief notes on the worship of Antinous have already been discussed earlier. Of the ancient authors, Pausanias provides the most information on the cult of Antinous. In book eight, while discussing Mantinea, Pausanias gives clues on what the cult and worship of Antinous entailed. In chapter nine, Pausanias writes, *ἐνομίσθη δὲ καὶ Ἀντίνου σφίσιν εἶναι θεός· ναῶν δὲ ἐν Μαντινείᾳ νεώτατός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ Ἀντίνου ναός*, ("Antinous also was adopted to be a god by them. And of the temples in Mantinea, the temple of Antinous is the newest.")⁴⁴ He writes that even elsewhere (outside of Mantinea), Antinous holds honors, although he does not mention the other places where these honors are held. However, Pausanias does write about Antinoopolis on the Nile -- καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ Νείλῳ πόλις Αἰγυπτίων ἐστὶν ἐπώνυμος Ἀντίνου,⁴⁵ ("And upon the Nile, there is a city of Egyptians named for Antinous").

It is noteworthy that while the author of the *Historia Augusta* calls the collective worshipers of Antinous Greeks, here, Pausanias writes that, although the Mantineans worshipped Antinous in Anatolia, the city named for Antinous is a city of Egyptians. This may be because the city is located in Egypt, and anyone living in Egypt, whether they are of Greek or Egyptian descent, is considered by Pausanias to be Egyptian.

Pausanias, at least, provides ways in which Antinous is worshipped in Mantinea. He writes of *τελεταί* and *ἁγῶνες* in honor of Antinous, the former

⁴⁴ Paus.8.9.7

⁴⁵ Ibid.

performed every year and the latter celebrated every four years.⁴⁶ There is mention of a new temple of Antinous in Mantinea and Pausanias identifies a place where horse races were held during the celebratory games in honor of Antinous.⁴⁷ He also writes of the place in which the contests were celebrated,

ἰόντι ἐς Τεγέαν ἐστὶν ἐν ἀριστερᾷ τῆς λεωφόρου παρὰ τοῖς Μαντινέων
τείχεσι χωρίον ἐς τῶν ἵππων τὸν δρόμον καὶ οὐ πόρρω τούτου στάδιον,
ἐνθα ἐπὶ τῷ Ἀντίνῳ τὸν ἀγῶνα τιθέασιν.⁴⁸

Going into Tegea, there is on the left of the highway, besides the walls of Mantineans, a race spot for horses and not far from this is a race-course, where they place the contest for Antinous.

The extent of the cult, and some of its beliefs and practices, can be seen in the writings of later Christian fathers, as Antinous is mentioned in the writing of over ten. Their writing contains much vitriol. For example, Justin Martyr writes that all Greeks “were prompt, through fear, to worship Antinous.” Their reluctance in worshipping Antinous, according to Justin Martyr, stemmed from the citizens’ knowledge of “both

⁴⁶ Ibid. while *τελετή* refers to rites of initiation performed for members joining a cult, *ἀγών* refers to games and contests held in honor of a god, such as the ones held at Olympia or Pythia, in honor of Zeus and Apollo.

⁴⁷ Paus.8.10.1

⁴⁸ Ibid.

who he was and what was his origin.”⁴⁹ The mission of the early Christian writers was to protect and defend the name of Christianity and in doing so, they attacked the rituals of the pagans and attributed motives to the cults which the pagans followed. In this way, they needed to name the rituals which they found problematic. Writers such as Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, were born after the cult was well established; therefore, in spite of their bias, their writing can be used as proof of the longevity of Antinous’ cult, and as a means to understand how Antinous was worshiped. In his *Exhortation to the Heathens*, Clement writes of Antinous that,

Another new deity was added to the number with great religious pomp in Egypt, and was near being so in Greece by the king of the Romans, who deified Antinous, whom he loved as Zeus loved Ganymede, and whose beauty was of a very rare order: for lust is not easily restrained, destitute as it is of fear; and men now observe the sacred nights of Antinous, the shameful character of which the lover who spent them with him knew well.⁵⁰

At this time, Clement stresses the newness of the Antinous cult and notes “the existence of a tomb, a temple, and a city dedicated to Antinous.”⁵¹ He too stresses the worship of Antinous by Greeks, and asserts that the Greeks worshipped Antonius because of

⁴⁹ Justin Martyr. 29; Martyr was contemporary with Antinous and so his writing is not evidence for the longevity and durability of the Antinous cult, but its original existence and worship.

⁵⁰ Clement of Alexandria.4

⁵¹ Siebeck 2013.166

Hadrian's will, implying that because they knew Antinous' character, they would not have done so otherwise. Tertullian mentions Antinous in passing in *Against Marcion* and Origen goes into detail about his cult while finding fault with the Egyptians and their practices. Origen's account of Antinous contains some idea of what the worshippers did in Antinoopolis.⁵² After condemning the relationship which Hadrian had with Antinous, Origen writes that,

if one were to investigate, in a spirit of truth and impartiality, the stories relating to Antinous, he would find that it was due to the magical arts and rites of the Egyptians that there was even the appearance of his performing anything (marvellous) in the city which bears his name.⁵³

Origen asserts that the magic to which he refers comes not from a deity, but from "demons claiming prophetic or healing power,"⁵⁴ attributing the miracles performed in the name of Antinous to the Egyptians and the demonic forces with which they associate. Although Origen means to slander the cult of Antinous, the link which he provides between acts done by demons and the miracles of Antinous allows the interpretation that Antinous' attributes included healing and prophecy. This information is useful because,

⁵² Of course, everything written by Origen must be subject to scrutiny, for his aim in writing about Antinous and the Egyptians and Greeks who worship him is to prove that their worship is wrong. In fact, Origen uses the worship of Antinous to show that such a worship is bad and that the worship of Jesus is good. Lambert suggests that Origen's long denouncement of the cult of Antinous and those that worship him might come from a comparison made by the Romans at the time between Antinous and Jesus. If this is true, Origen's detailed account makes more sense.

⁵³ Origen.3.36

⁵⁴ Ibid.

while prophecy was mentioned earlier in the *Historia Augusta*, healing was not seen in the other texts. Furthermore, Origen speaks of the Egyptians who worship Antinous in Antinoopolis and the oracles which come from the city, placing these oracles in Egypt. He too, like Pausanias, calls the people of Antinoopolis Egyptian. But Origen further adds to the confusion of what it means to be Egyptian by treating Egyptians as Greeks and giving names such as Zeus and Apollo to their gods.⁵⁵ It is unclear what Origen means by Egyptians, since in a different chapter he writes of the belief in Antinous by either “Egyptians or Greeks.”⁵⁶

The test of the durability of the cult comes from the writings of later Christian fathers such as Athanasius and Jerome. Athanasius, writing during the time of Constantine, renounces the worship of Antinous and equates this worship with that of the emperors.⁵⁷ He writes that the people of Egypt worshipped Antinous because Hadrian ordered it, though he refrains from mentioning that Hadrian had, by Athanasius’ time, been dead for about two hundred years. Jerome, writing in the fifth century CE, mentions the temples dedicated to Antinous. He writes that “[The Romans] built monuments and temples to their dead as we see up to the present day, such as the one to Antinous, servant

⁵⁵ Origen.3.37; Origen’s treatment of the Greeks and Egyptians as interchangeable is relevant to the question of identity in the ancient world. As discussed below, the people of the eastern half of Rome were often assimilated into Greek identity, and were encouraged to take part in Greek culture. With that in mind, although Origen does not make a distinction here, it is most likely that the Egyptians of whom he talks are Greek speaking.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Athanasius.9

to the Emperor Hadrian, in whose honour also games were celebrated, and a city founded bearing his name, and a temple with priests established."⁵⁸ Although the majority of the Christian writers, through their denouncement, seem to insist that the people of Greece, Rome, and Egypt worshipped Antinous because of the fear instilled in them by Hadrian, the fact that they wrote about Antinous centuries after his and Hadrian's deaths is a testament to the widespread and long-lasting practice of the cult.

The Christian texts reiterate that Antinous was incorporated into the cults of other, more established gods. Although Antinous was referred to as a hero in his own cult, his divinity showed him as a figure assimilated into the cult of other gods. The Obelisk of Antinous explicitly displays this integration; it also mentions the oracles performed in his name. The obelisk calls Antinous "Osiris Antinous" and talks of his taking part in the honors of Osiris. The north face provides information, which discusses the games held for Antinous in Antinoopolis, and the miracles which Antinous provided. The obelisk claims that Antinous hears the prayers of his devotees and provides healing visions in addition to curing afflictions. These claims echo those made by both pagan and Christian historical texts. The obelisk also mentions Thoth, though he is not associated with Antinous as Osiris is. Instead, Thoth is mentioned as a helper to Antinous.

Jones writes that on almost all the coins minted which celebrate the deity of Antinous, Antinous is described as a hero.⁵⁹ Delphian coins call him a "hero before the

⁵⁸ Jerome. 22 Hegesippus

⁵⁹ Jones 2010.80; This is seen in temples dedicated to Antinous as well, such as the temple of Antinous at Socanica, where an inscription reads: "This temple is dedicated to Antinous the Hero, by command of Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus and his son Lucius Aelius Caesar Augustus, the colonists of the Dardanian silver mines, by the

gates” and the coins from Hadrianoutherai call him the “good hero.”⁶⁰ He is identified as “Iacchos Antinoos” in Adramyttian and “new Iacchos” at Tarsus. Lambert writes that Antinous’ coins from Tarsus and Tion identify him as Bacchus and once as “new Apollo.”⁶¹

In the period in which Antinous was deified, “new mystery rites occur[ed] frequently.”⁶² The cult of Antinous “presumably had the traditional function of purifying the souls of initiates for entrance into the next life.”⁶³ Vout writes that “epigraphic and literary evidence attests that Antinous was associated with a variety of gods,”⁶⁴ including Bacchus, Hermes, and Osiris. Pausanias provides a key idea as to how Antinous was depicted and which god he was associated with as well. In his writing on the temple in Mantinea, Pausanias mentions that the statues of Antinous in the temple were made to resemble Dionysus. Antinous was also associated with Ganymede, Apollo, and Narcissus. Inscriptions dedicated to the god Antinous, asking him to help the dead and keep them safe in death, seem to corroborate these statements.⁶⁵ His association both with

administration of the Imperial Procurator Telesphoros, freely made this.” Lambert makes a very convincing case for the worship of Antinous as a hero or a god, separate from other deities, although his association with more established deities cannot be denied.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Lambert 1997.181

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Vout 2005.90

⁶⁵ Siebeck 2013.154

Osiris and Dionysus portray him more as a god of death, the afterlife, and the passage between the two; the god of the afterlife, Osiris, was killed and dismembered by his brother Set and reassembled by his wife Isis, and Dionysus had very similar origin story in some Greek myths.⁶⁶ Of two inscriptions dedicated to Antinous found in Mantinea, one reads,

Doxa's son, Isochrysus, whom the god Antinoos himself loved dearly as one enthroned with the immortals, Epitynchanus, his father, constructed in the form of a bronze image and erected a statue of his son by the decree of his fatherland.⁶⁷

The most frequently occurring identity is that of Dionysus-Osiris, with sculptures of Hermes and Apollo appearing less. Considering the historical setting in which Antinous sculptures were found, when regarding material remains linked to Antinous, is important. In her article, "Antinous, Archaeology and History," Caroline Vout questions the validity of all the sculptures which have been identified as Antinous. By exposing the popularity of Antinous sculptures in the Renaissance--for example, the sculpture of Jonah in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, which bears the head of the Farnese Antinous--Vout suggests that some sculptures which archaeologists categorized as Antinous might not be correct. Finally, because of Antinous' popularity, she questions whether some sculptures

⁶⁶ Hornblower 2003.463 and 1051

⁶⁷ Siebeck 2013.154; The other inscription comes is from a Spartan named Gaius Julius Eurycles Herculanus, who erected a stoa for the city of Mantinea and the local god Antinous.

found in Italy are even ancient. Vout's foray into this archaeology and history of archaeological discovery serves to bring into question whether the prevalence of Antinous sculptures in Italy are a show of his popularity in the Renaissance.⁶⁸ Accepting Vout, and using the Capitoline Hermes as an example, provides the possibility that some of the sculptures which have been identified as Antinous in association with another god are not Antinous at all, but merely handsome youths, or sculptures of gods, which were named Antinous because archaeologists wished them to be Antinous. The coins which depict him holding a caduceus are more reliable tools in understanding Antinous' association with Hermes.

When Antinous is associated with other deities, it is primarily with those connected with the underworld. Osiris was the Egyptian god of the afterlife and the underworld, whose dead body was mutilated and reformed briefly by Isis. Dionysus, too, was associated with rebirth and regeneration. In some myths, he was torn apart by Titans and restored to life.⁶⁹ In another myth, Dionysus journeyed to the underworld to bring his mother back to Olympus.⁷⁰ This journey to the underworld both linked Dionysus to the myth of Osiris and showed him to be a conqueror of death. Additionally, Hermes helped guide the souls of the dead to the underworld, as he was the only god with the ability to pass back and forth between the realm of the living and that of Hades.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Vout 2005

⁶⁹ Hornblower 2003.463 and 1051

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Clay 1989.95

The worship of Antinous was primarily the worship of a god who conquered death, but in places such as Antinoopolis, it was also that of a healing god. On his obelisk, it is mentioned that Antinous is “raised again to new life.”⁷² When he is depicted as Hermes on his coins, Antinous is shown holding a caduceus, perhaps intent on leading the souls of the dead into a new life. Antinous himself seems to have conquered death and become immortal, just as Dionysus and Osiris did, and because Antinous was human once, he could lead the souls of other humans into the next life. This association can be seen in the inscriptions found at Mantinea quoted above, in which a father entrusts the body of his son to the care of Antinous. The textual evidence from Pausanias, Origen, and Clement suggests that sacred rites were performed in honor of Antinous, at least in Mantinea. Perhaps these sacred rites and initiation to them were the guarantee that Antinous would provide safe passage or eternal life to his dead devotee.

Lastly, it is important to note the locations in which the worship of Antinous took place. Lambert asserts that the worship of Antinous was just as prevalent in Italy as it was in the eastern part of the Empire. He admits that there were no coins and no games held in honor of Antinous in Italy, but the presence of the sculptures of Antinous must mean that there was a strong religious following for him in Italy. However, as Lambert himself writes, half of the sculptures of Antinous found in Italy come from Hadrian’s Villa, a place expected to hold these sculptures because of Hadrian’s presence.⁷³ Lambert also

⁷² Lambert 1997.183

⁷³ And if the recent discovery of the building thought to be Antinous’ tomb is accepted, then Hadrian’s Villa held these sculptures of Antinous because his tomb was there, in addition to Hadrian’s desire to have such sculptures in his own home.

writes that Antinous had a large religious following in Naples and that there, “a section of the city was named after him and there is evidence of a temple.”⁷⁴ But Lambert himself qualifies this statement by claiming that at this time, Naples was largely Greek speaking. Additionally, he suggests that “Antinous” was a name commonly given to children throughout the peninsula, but fails to mention that this could be evidence of the popularity of the name separate from the figure Antinous. The name Antinous was not unknown in the ancient world before the deification of Antinous, with a major character in the *Odyssey* bearing the name, and both Polybius and Livy mentioning an Antinous in their discussion of the war with Perseus of Macedon.⁷⁵

Lambert’s assertions, therefore, fall short of convincing. The sculptures of Antinous are mainly from Hadrian’s Villa and those that are not could be misidentified as Antinous. The only city in Italy which Lambert mentions, with the most dedicated following to Antinous, is Greek speaking. When discussing Antinous and his cult, ancient sources do not mention Italy at all. Therefore, it seems that the worship of Antinous was not as prevalent in Italy as Lambert seems to suggest. The only source that comes close to such an idea is Cassius Dio, who merely uses the hyperbole of the sculptures of Antinous being distributed throughout the world.

Instead, the ancient sources discuss the worship of Antinous primarily in the East, referring either to Greeks and Egyptians. Pausanias, the authors of *Historia Augusta*, along with Origen, Clement, Jerome, and Athanasius, all refer to the rites of Antinous

⁷⁴ Lambert 1997.188

⁷⁵ Liv.45.25.5, Plb. 27.15.7

practiced by people who dwelled in Egypt or people who were identified by the sources as Greek speaking. Even in Naples, which Lambert uses as proof that Antinous was worshipped in Italy, the population was Greek speaking. In addition, the games in honor of Antinous were held in the Greek speaking world. Moreover, the priest of Antinous had a special seat at the theater of Dionysus in Athens. The excavated and discovered coins of Antinous came exclusively from the Greek speaking world. In fact, all major Greek cities in Asia Minor and mainland Greece issued coins of Antinous except Alexandria.⁷⁶ The cult of Antinous was more popular and stronger in the eastern part of the Empire than the west and, as far as the more recent archaeological evidence is concerned, Antinous worship was more extensive in the east.⁷⁷ As shown by the material remains and the written sources, Antinous worship was more popular in the eastern part of the Roman Empire.

⁷⁶ Lambert 1997.189; that Alexandria did not issue coins of Antinous is interesting. This might have been in a retaliation, because Hadrian did not deem Alexandria Greek enough to join the Hellenistic league. A league which he expanded during his reign.

⁷⁷ Vout 2005. 85; According to Vout, the only sculpture of Antinous discovered with an identifying mark is assumed to have been found in Syria. She writes that although there are doubts as to whether the inscribed name was intended for the bust originally, there is a perfect match between the broken sections, and this leads to an innocent break.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEOPLE WHO WORSHIPPED ANTINOUS

Scholars have attributed the worship of Antinous to various reasons such as fear of Hadrian or the genuine belief in Antinous; in addition, drowning victims were almost always deified in Egypt, because of the fate of Osiris.⁷⁸ Furthermore, knowing that the worship of Antinous was more popular in the east does not answer why it was so. The fact that it persisted throughout centuries, even after Hadrian's death, when Antinous himself had done nothing worthy of deification, is unusual. Even as early as the third century, Justin Martyr was attributing the worship of Antinous to the fear of the emperor.⁷⁹ However, it is difficult to make a case that the people of the eastern part of the Roman Empire continued to worship Antinous centuries after Hadrian's death because they feared the emperor, especially since the emperors after Hadrian did not have any respect or care for the cult that he established. This can be seen in the action taken by Elagabalus in the third century, around the year 220, who moved the obelisk of Antinous from its original location (possibly Hadrian's villa, possibly Antinoopolis, although the location is highly disputed) to Rome for his own entertainment and to honor the new festival which he established.⁸⁰ Fear of Hadrian could not have motivated this worship, but if it did not do so, then what did?

⁷⁸ Bruun 2016.372

⁷⁹ Justin Martyr. 29

⁸⁰ Boatwright 1997.258

Lambert devotes an entire chapter to making the argument that Antinous was worshipped because his ascension to godhood after an early death, and his conquest of death encouraged people to worship him in hopes that they too would be safe after death.

⁸¹ This argument does hold some value, since material remains show that people entrusted their dead to the care of Antinous. However, deification was not uncommon in Rome and members of the imperial family were often deified. That Antinous was worshipped beyond assimilation to other gods, that there were contests held in his honor, and that his cult became an object of ridicule for later Christian fathers, shows the prominence of his cult. The worship of Antinous was prominent, more or less, exclusively in the eastern, Greek-speaking part of the Empire. As shown by Lambert, even when it appeared in the western part of the Empire, it appeared in a prominently Greek speaking section.⁸² The distinction shows that there was a connection and draw towards Antinous in the Greek-speaking part of the Empire that did not exist in the non Greek-speaking West. This section will make the case that Antinous appealed to the Greek-speaking world more so than the Western, non Greek-speaking world because he himself was Greek. To understand the appeal of Antinous' cult, as more than just a cult assimilated into the larger ones of Osiris or Dionysus, it is important to understand the position and identity of the Greek-speaking Eastern Empire and the divide between that section and the Roman west.

⁸¹ Lambert 1997.184-197

⁸² Lambert 1997.188

This is not to say that Hadrian's institution of the cult did not play a part in its initial success. Perhaps "fear" is not the right word for what Hadrian used to popularize the cult, but "bribery" might be a word that fits Hadrian's action better. In the Greek speaking East, the Emperors were very involved in the establishment of their own cult.⁸³ Hadrian was deeply involved in the establishment of Antinous' cult in the East. For example, Hadrian encouraged Greeks to become citizens of Antinoopolis by granting them land and providing them with other benefits.⁸⁴ This type of encouragement did lead to Egyptians of Greek descent voluntarily becoming citizens of Antinoopolis. But, while many of these citizens claimed citizenship and the benefits that came with it, they did not live in the city proper.⁸⁵ This shows that fear of Hadrian is an exaggeration, as even Hadrian's enticements could not force people to worship Antinous if they did not wish to do so.

Although Rome's origins claim the city to be a land of immigrants, by the time of the empire there seems to be a clear anti-eastern bias. Such attitudes are best demonstrated in text, in the literary works of Petronius and Martial. Although the former's work can be read in part as a commentary on the condition of life for freedmen, it contains characters which were the perspective for the Roman audience, who see the clearly eastern-born freedmen as inferior and less Roman.⁸⁶ Martial shows resentment

⁸³ Price 1984.68

⁸⁴ Bell 1940.133-147

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ In the *Satyricon*, and specially the *Cena Trimalchionis*, Encolpius points out many odd and not Roman acts, performed by Trimalchio. Trimalchio himself displays his life in

towards people not born in Rome--Greek speaking former slaves from the east who do not have the culture or education of Romans--gaining prominence in the Empire.⁸⁷ His writing acts as more of a direct attack and less of a commentary. The hostile attitude, however, transcends those shown towards freedmen and is applied more generally to the rest of the empire.

In his article, "Conquest by text: Juvenal and Plutarch on Egypt," Richard Alston applies the negative views of the Romans towards their Egyptian subjects. He writes that Juvenal, in *Satire XV*, "sets up two major... axes of division which create a differential between [Romans and Egyptians],"⁸⁸ effectively categorizing the Egyptians into "them" and the Romans into "us," thus providing a cultural boundary that is impossible to cross. Juvenal points to the charges of cannibalism brought upon Egyptians and the animal worship present in their religion, writing that

Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens
Aegyptos portenta colat? crocodilon adorat
pars haec, illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibin.
effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopithecii,
5 dimidio magicae resonant ubi Memnone chordae
atque vetus Thebe centum iacet obruta portis,
illic aeluros, hic piscem fluminis, illic
oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam (Juv 5.15.1-7)

Who doesn't know, Bithynian Volusius, what sort of omens (Egyptian animal-gods)

Asia before he became a slave, on the wall of his house (28.3-8). His freedman friend Hermeros who yells at Giton and Ascylos also talks about having sold himself into slavery from a vassal state just so he could become a Roman citizen, but by doing so he acknowledges his own foreign background (57.4).

⁸⁷ Mart.10.76

⁸⁸ Alston 1994.101

Mad Egypt cultivates? This part prays to a crocodile
That part fears the ibis, sated with snakes.
The golden likenesses of the sacred long tailed ape shines
Where magic chords ring from halved (destroyed) Memnon
And ancient Thebes lies buried with its hundred gates,
There a cat, here a fish of the river, in another place
An entire town worships a dog, no one worships Diana

And later

...lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis
mensa, nefas illic fetum iugulare capellae:
carnibus humanis vesci licet, (Juv 5.15.11-13)

The table holds back from all wooly animals,
It is a sin there to slaughter the young of a goat;
It is allowed to be fed on human flesh.

By separating the two cultures, Juvenal establishes a hierarchy of culture between Rome and Egypt, with Rome as the moral superior. Juvenal's view of the Egyptians as morally inferior echoes throughout Roman literature and art of the imperial period. During this period, Nilotic imagery, both in poetry and in art, demonstrated the moral and even physical inferiority of Egyptians to Romans.⁸⁹

The attitude shown towards the Egyptians was shown towards the Greeks as well because increasingly during the Empire as literary texts and inscriptions demonstrate, Egyptianness and Greekness were conflated, with Greekness prevailing. When discussing Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, Alston observes that Plutarch takes an Egyptian myth and

⁸⁹ Prop.4.8.39-42, for example, features a Nilotic scene complete with an Egyptian dwarf dancing drunkenly. Such scenes have been found in Mosaics and frescoes in Pompeii as well, for more on Nilotic scenes in the Roman material culture, see Versluys 2002

interprets it in a Greek philosophical context.⁹⁰ Plutarch turns the myth into a complex Platonic allegory, “where the dismembered Osiris is the *logos* which Isis has to restore.”⁹¹ In doing so, he assimilates Egyptianness to a more universal Greekness, which, according to Alston, is in line with the attitudes towards Egypt and Greece in the Empire. Alston concludes his survey of Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride* by asserting that under imperial Roman rule, many Egyptian cultural artefacts ceased to be Egyptian and were instead assimilated into Greek culture.⁹²

The assimilation of people into a Greek identity occurred in Syria as well. Nathanael Andrade discusses this in his book *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World*. Although Andrade focuses on Syria, ultimately his book shows the integration of Greek and Syrian culture in the eastern part of Rome. He writes that in imperial Syria, although Rome distinguished Syrian as an ethnicity, there were ethnic Greeks who were also called Syrians,⁹³ “[indicating] that Greeks in Syria had meaningfully assumed the label ‘Syrian.’”⁹⁴ Under Roman imperial administration, he continues, “Greek polities integrated members of local ethnic groups into their civic process in ways that prompted ethnic Syrians to assume civic Greek identifications and interweave Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern idioms into new expressions of Greekness and Syrianness.”⁹⁵ Andrade gives

⁹⁰ Alston 1994.104

⁹¹ Alston 1994.103

⁹² Alston 1994.104

⁹³ Andrade 2013.95

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Andrade 2013. 97

the case of a Syrian who died in Septimius Severus' reign as evidence of this integration. The man, Thaimos, son of Saados, left behind a tomb with an inscription which asserted (in Greek) that he was a citizen of the Greek city of Canatha, though his name suggests ethnic Arabic or Syrian descent.⁹⁶

As seen in Andrade's example, this combination of culture and language was not merely practiced by the Romans from Italy, but also by the people who lived in the eastern provinces. The people living in the eastern part of the empire were encouraged to take part in and identify with Greek language and customs. This assimilation is seen both in Origen's statement quoted above, in which he uses the word "Egyptian" and "Greek" interchangeably to refer to the worshippers of Antinous,⁹⁷ and in the writing of Josephus, who uses "Greek" and "Syrian" interchangeably to describe the people who lived in Caesarea.⁹⁸

The conflation of Greek identity with the identity of locals in the other empire provinces, along with disgust and distrust of Greeks and their attitudes, can be seen in several of Juvenal's satires and in the poetry of Propertius. In *Satire III*, Juvenal directly complains about Greeks, mixing Greek and Syrian identity at the same time. Juvenal laments the influence of Greek culture on Roman culture, finding faults with the "language, customs, flutes, string instruments, foreign tambourines, and the prostitutes,"⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Andrade 2013. 110

⁹⁷ Origen.3.36

⁹⁸ Josephus. 15.328-330; Andrade 2013.106-107 treats in detail.

⁹⁹ Juv.1.3.63-65

that have poured into the Tiber from the “Syrian Orontes.”¹⁰⁰ After a xenophobic break,

Juvenal returns to attacking Greece and the Greeks by writing:

natio comoeda est. rides, maiore cachinno
concutitur; flet, si lacrimas conspexit amici,
nec dolet; igniculum brumae si tempore poscas,
accipit endromidem; si dixeris “aestuo,” sudat.
non sumus ergo pares: melior, qui semper et omni
105 nocte dieque potest aliena sumere vultum
a facie... (Juv 1.3.100-106)

[Greece] is given to acting. You laugh, and he is shaken
With greater laughter; he cries, if he has beheld the tears of a friend,
Not feeling pain. If you request a small flame in winter time,
He gets a woolen cloak. If you said “I’m hot,” he sweats.
Therefore we are not equal; he is better, who always, both in every
Night and day, can assume a likeness belonging to another face,

As he did with the Egyptians, Juvenal presents a clear line separating “us” and “them.”

Greeks are actors, he says, implying that Romans are not. Greeks are able to pretend at feelings to deceive their fellows, “to assume a likeness which belongs to another,” but Romans cannot. While mixing Greek and Syrian identity and separating Greeks from Romans, Juvenal continues to claim the moral superiority of Romans. Just as in *Satire XV*, where Juvenal wrote that Romans were better than Egyptians because their gods were not animal based, here he writes that Romans are better than Greeks because they cannot pretend at feelings.

Propertius finds similar faults with Greekness. In poem 11 of book three of his *Elegies*, Propertius bemoans the fate that almost fell on Rome -- the rule of Cleopatra. While listing the atrocities that Cleopatra almost brought on Rome, he calls Cleopatra

¹⁰⁰ Juv.1.3.62

regina Canopi, at the same time saying that she is of Philip of Macedon's line.¹⁰¹ In the same section, Propertius brings to mind the treachery of the Greeks, writing about Pompey's death at the hand of the Ptolemies and calling it an evil for the Romans.¹⁰² He also writes of the Egyptian atrocities Cleopatra intended to bring upon Rome: the dog headed god Anubis, which is echoed in Juvenal; the sistrum, echoed again in Juvenal; and finally, *foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo*, ("And to stretch foul mosquito nets on the tarpeian rock").¹⁰³

Propertius merges the Greek and Egyptian aspects of Cleopatra, but his characterization of both is consistent; they are bad. Propertius' threat of eastern things coming into Rome and polluting the Tarpeian rock is realized in Juvenal's *Satire XV*. Propertius expresses gratitude that such non-Roman customs have not yet found their way to Rome. Juvenal is angry that they have. Both writers show xenophobia underneath their anger. They show the fear that Greek, Egyptian, Syrian, and all-together eastern customs will enter Rome and destroy Roman ideals. Propertius' reference to mosquito nets on the Tarpeian rock also shows the Roman view of the effeminate easterners, who cannot endure the bite of mosquitos and, instead, must protect themselves. Egypt, Greece, and Syria may have belonged to Rome and may have been under Roman rule, but it is clear that they were not seen as equal to Rome in morality, strength of character, or culture.

¹⁰¹ Prop.3.11.39-40

¹⁰² Prop.3.11.35

¹⁰³ Prop.3.11.41-45

It was this distrusted and un-Roman group of people who adopted Antinous as a god and continued to worship him even after the death of Hadrian. Foremost in this worship were the people of Mantinea, who claimed the same descent as Antinous, and the people of Antinoopolis, Greeks living in Egypt under Roman rule. While primary sources cannot provide the true attitude of the people who worshipped Antinous in detail, the sources' depiction of the treatment of Greeks and easterners in the Roman Empire can. It was not necessarily Antinous himself or even the belief in Antinous that guided these people into worshipping him, but perhaps his worship was tied with the identity of these Greek-speaking people living under Roman rule.

Two distinct but connected causes emerge when examining the reasons behind the worship of Antinous. The first is the connection of the cult of Antinous to the imperial government. Because this cult was established by an emperor, it reflected the traditions and desires of the ruling elite. In worshipping him, Antinous' devotees showed their connection to the Roman rulers who administered laws and taxed their provinces. The second cause is that although the cult of Antinous was established by a Roman emperor and a product of Roman rule, Antinous was a Greek and, therefore, a figure relatable to the Greek-speaking world. It is even possible that Antinous' Greekness, combined with a desire to appeal to the Greek-speaking provinces of Rome, are what led Hadrian to establish his cult so strongly in the eastern part of the Empire.

Dio's account of Antinous' death contains the speculation that Antinous gave his life willingly for Hadrian's sake and, in return, Hadrian deified him and built a city in his

name.¹⁰⁴ Although Dio's account contains material which may have been untrue--material repeated in the writings of the Christian fathers--they could contain some semblance of truth, not that Hadrian played a part in Antinous' death, but that Hadrian took a terrible situation and used it to his advantage. By deifying a Greek youth and encouraging his worship in the Greek East, Hadrian was appealing to these subjects, more specifically the Greeks of Anatolia and Egypt, who had come to Egypt under the Ptolemies.

Hadrian spent much of his own rule traveling to the various parts of his empire. While traveling, Hadrian, a known Hellenophile, paid special attention to cities of ancient Greek origin. His involvement in the eastern half of the Empire included the completion of the temple of Zeus Olympius in Athens and the amplification of a former Julio-Claudian league, which included classical cities that sent members to games and festivals.¹⁰⁵ In augmenting monuments and funding leagues, Hadrian drew attention to the Greekness of the members. Hadrian valued the Greek cities that could demonstrate a long classical genealogy, such as Cyrene, western Asia Minor, and the cities of mainland Greece.¹⁰⁶

Hadrian's focus on Greekness can be seen in his establishment of Antinoopolis; unlike other sources, both Roman and Christian, Hadrian separated Greeks with an ethnic Greek background from Egyptians. Although Hadrian did not care for the cities established by Alexander, he clearly cared for the Greeks who had come to Egypt under

¹⁰⁴ Cass. Dio.69.11.3

¹⁰⁵ Andrade 2013. 175

¹⁰⁶ Andrade 2013.175-176

Alexander's successors. Antinoopolis, established more inland than Alexandria or Cyrene, accepted only people of Greek origins as its citizens. As stated above, Hadrian encouraged citizenship with promises of land. Hadrian intended Antinoopolis to be a Greek haven in Egypt, populated by people of ethnic Greek lineage and joined together in the worship of Antinous.

Hadrian was the embodiment of imperial governance,¹⁰⁷ a physical representation and the strongest symbol of the people who held power in the empire. There is no doubt that when Hadrian established Antinous as a god, his subjects began their worship of Antinous because the emperor decreed it. But their continual worship shows that this worship was not merely for the sake of the emperor. While they adopted this worship to align themselves with the ruling power, the worship of Antinous was a reflection of the Roman identity in which the people in these provinces had little share. Just as, in Petronius' *Satyricon*, Trimalchio used his status as a priest of Augustus to demonstrate his connection to Roman society, placing his title as a priest of Augustus in the front of his house,¹⁰⁸ so the Greek-speaking people of the eastern part of the empire could use the worship of Antinous as their connection to Roman culture.

This reflection of Roman culture is especially poignant when considering the harsh treatment of Greeks and Egyptians at the hands of Roman authors. These were people ruled by a country whose citizens constantly found fault with Greek and Egyptian cultures and rituals. Their Romanness was always under question, and at times, outright

¹⁰⁷ Andrade 2013.178

¹⁰⁸ Petr.30.2-3

dismissed by authors such as Martial, Juvenal, and Propertius so it is reasonable to assume that if the most powerful figure in the Roman world established a cult in their region, the Greek-speaking provincials would want to take part in that cult.¹⁰⁹

If Hadrian's design was to appeal to his Greek subjects, the fact that Antinous was worshipped most strongly in the "purer" Greek regions of the empire and Antinoopolis, the Greek haven built by Hadrian, attests to his success. In establishing the cult of Antinous, Hadrian also established a relationship between his administration and the Greek natives, as seen in the festivities of Antinous, where Mantineans and the citizens of Antinoopolis performed rituals and sent initiates for the rites of the cult.

However, this attempt by Hadrian to appeal to the Greek speaking provinces would not have worked if Antinous himself had not been Greek. Pausanias writes that the people of Mantinea celebrated Antinous because he was Bithynian and the people of Bithynia claimed the same ancestry as the people of Mantinea. The games at Mantinea were one of the larger events mentioned in the ancient sources, second only to the celebrations at Antinoopolis. What reason other than a sense of kinship could have driven the people of Mantinea to celebrate Antinous so extravagantly? The worship of Antinous, if Antinous had been some boy from Italy, would not have helped the standing of the eastern provinces at all. It was Antinous' Greekness and what that meant concerning

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps there is some benefit in comparing the cult of Antinous with that of Serapis. The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* notes that the early Ptolemies introduced and supported the cult of Serapis in Egypt and founded a Serapeum in Alexandria to provide their people with a god which was both Greek and Egyptian. This god's powers were vaguely defined, just like Antinous' powers, but healing was one of the more known attributes of Serapis. It stands to reason that Antinous could also serve as a god, established by Hadrian, and meant to appeal to the Greeks of the world. The fact that healing was attributed to Antinous as well strengthens this argument.

Greek identity and its value in the Roman Empire that encouraged the Greek-speaking world to worship him.

In a world where people of Greek ethnicity were mocked and distrusted by Roman writers, and despite financial success, were seen as foreign and un-Roman, Antinous was honored with deification. Furthermore, even by ancient standards, Antinous hadn't accomplished anything. His only claim to Hadrian's attention was beauty and perhaps, more importantly, being Greek. The Greeks who identified ethnically and linguistically with Antinous could worship someone familiar, someone similar to them in language and origin, who was not seen as deceptive and untrue, but was honored by the Roman emperor. In doing so, they could also show their Roman identity, since the cult of Antinous was established by a Roman authority figure. For this reason, Hadrian's death did not affect people's worship of Antinous. It was neither Hadrian who persuaded the people to worship Antinous or the fear of him, but the innate Romanness that Hadrian stood for. In worshipping Antinous, the Greeks who struggled with identity under Roman rule could express that identity while maintaining their Greek identity as well.

For this reason, the worship of Antinous continued well after Hadrian's death. The cult of Antinous was not merely a Greek or a Roman entity. It was a hybrid of the two and appealed to the people who were also a hybrid of Greek and Roman identity. Just as the cult of Serapis connected the native Egyptians and the Ptolemaic Greeks in Egypt, Hadrian's appeal to the Greeks became a means to express both Romanness and Greekness. The cult of Antinous provided a sense of inclusion in the Roman world for its eastern worshippers without taking away their Greek identity. It was important that

Antinous was Greek because, without his Greekness, the cult would have had less appeal to the group of ostracized eastern citizens who were mocked and ridiculed by literary figures under Roman rule.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Antinous' worship persisted in the Roman Empire because the cult of Antinous appealed to the Greek speaking people of the Empire. Ancient sources, including Pausanias, Cassius Dio, and the author of the *Historia Augusta*, along with material culture, confirm that Antinous' cult was more popular in the East than the West. The Christian fathers show both the durability of the cult and its geographical location as well. The worship of Antinous was possible because the Roman world contained so many different ethnicities, including ones that were often belittled and mistrusted by the Roman elite.

These ethnically Greek people found both a reflection of their own identity and a way to connect to the Roman one in the cult of Antinous. In worshipping him, they could show themselves to be supportive of Rome, while maintaining their Greek roots. This is seen most clearly in the case of the Mantineans, who claimed relations to the people of Bithynia. Antinous and his cult provided inclusion for a people who were often seen as inferior and mocked by Roman authors. Although Antinous did not achieve anything spectacular during his lifetime, his connection to Hadrian and his ethnic identity ensured that his cult thrived after his death.

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